

Operating in Conflict

Current Practices in the Development Community

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Introduction

Since the end of the cold war, foreign aid has been increasingly targeted at failing and failed states. Two-thirds of the countries that USAID works in have experienced conflict during the last five years.¹ This shift in focus carries with it the need for humanitarian organizations to operate in countries experiencing civil war, ethnic conflict, and difficult transitions into democracy.² Many development groups lack the tools and know-how to operate in unstable environments and are forced to make ad hoc changes to projects when they wish to continue providing assistance. Some efforts have been successful. More often, they have not fulfilled their objectives. As more relief agencies have realized the need to establish best practices and determine under which conditions development work is appropriate, disagreements have arisen. Some groups believe that in the heart of conflict, only emergency humanitarian relief should be provided. Others argue that development projects are most valuable during extended conflict because they provide jobs and the only hope for struggling communities. No matter which stance is taken, it has become clear that development groups will have to decide what actions to take when conflicts erupt in coming years. These groups would all benefit from the dissemination of best practices, lessons learned, and case studies providing models for action in conflict areas.

During the past decade, numerous working groups have been established and conferences held to discuss the type of aid that should be provided to countries in conflict. Among these was the USAID-PVO Dialogue on Working in Conflict, sponsored by the Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (PVC). These conferences have focused on topics such as 1) What development programs are appropriate under which conditions, 2) How to sequence interventions and what amount of coordination should take place between organizations, and 3) How to measure project impact. In the development community, one important question has continually risen to the forefront of this discussion. How can Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) escape the tyranny of the moment when programming in conflict environments, while acknowledging that each situation is unique and requires flexibility?³

¹ Natsios, Andrew. Speech given at the InterAction Forum. 21 May 2003.

² "Operational Challenges in Post-Conflict Societies." USAID Workshop, 28-29 October 1997. Office of Transition Initiatives.

³ Mancino, Kimberly, Anita Malley, and Santiago Cornejo. "Development Relief: NGO Efforts to Promote Sustainable Peace and Development in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies." InterAction. June 2001.

The decentralization of both the PVO community and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) makes it impossible for any one organization to answer this question for the group. Nor would it be appropriate for any one to do so. However, USAID and PVC have the potential to have a significant positive impact on projects done in these difficult environments. In order to facilitate this process, PVC could take an active role in providing PVOs access to proven tools and useable models for working in conflict situations. PVC could also ensure that contingency plans for the event of conflict are created by all at-risk grantees.

USAID's Work in Conflict

The Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation has always worked to strengthen the institutional capacity of PVOs and NGOs to provide effective programs in developing countries. With the adoption of PVC's 2003-2007 Strategic Framework, this focus shifted in order to better align PVC's goals with those of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA). The Strategic Framework includes an increased emphasis on DCHA priority countries, or those post-conflict countries where USAID operates. It is this change that has made PVC aware of the lack of best practices and variety of approaches to planning for conflict that exist within its own grant programs. While PVC does not wish to stipulate specific practices to development organizations, it does want to ensure that all PVOs receiving USAID grants have analyzed their ability to operate in conflict and adjusted their programs so that projects are sustainable even in difficult environments.

The Need for Coordination within DCHA

Coordination within DCHA is imperative. All six offices, within DCHA, focus to some degree on conflict areas. Their efforts should not be at cross-purposes. PVC should coordinate its efforts with those offices whose goals most closely align with its own. Two of these offices are the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) and the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (CMM).

The Office of Transition Initiatives was created in 1994. OTI provides grants to PVOs and NGOs working to move from relief to development efforts in transitioning states. These states are often in great need of stabilization, conflict mitigation, and infrastructure reconstruction. However, OTI's involvement in a country is rarely longer than two years. This short time frame

creates problems both achieving and recording the desired impact of development projects. In the extensive research done by the office on the difficulties of performing development work in post-conflict environments, OTI identifies the need for longer term development assistance. This is one need that PVC is filling. PVC would benefit by examining the research and best practice models created by the office and by making those tools more readily available to the PVOs working in similar areas.

The Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation was established in September of 2002 to function as a tool kit of best practices for operating in conflict environments. The office will provide assistance to USAID bureaus and missions working in unstable environments. One main tool that CMM will provide to missions is the “Conflict Assessment Framework,” developed by Sharon Morris, a CMM staff member.⁴ The framework will allow missions to conduct conflict assessments in their own countries in order to identify and target the root causes of conflict in their development activities. While the office provides valuable assistance, its efforts are not directed at helping the PVO community develop programs to efficiently and effectively operate in conflict countries. That role could be played by PVC.

The Conflict Assessment Framework provides a useful outline of those elements which often lead to conflict. This information could be used, not only by missions, but also by PVOs in order to assess the needs and difficulties in the areas in which they work. The framework encourages those conducting an assessment to examine the root causes of conflict, access to resources, the institutional capacity, windows of vulnerability, and external causes of conflict in the unstable areas where development work is being performed. In order to facilitate this assessment, CMM provides questionnaires organized by sector (Democracy and Governance, Natural Resources, and Economics) to determine the level of risk. CMM also offers a simple chart which outlines the causes of civil strife. This chart would be a helpful tool for PVOs to use when assessing the impact of their programs on either latent or present causes of conflict. PVC could direct PVOs to these resources when asking them to develop risk mitigation strategies in their Detailed Implementation Plans (DIPs).

⁴ Morris, Sharon. “Conflict Assessment Framework: A publication of the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation.” USAID. 7 January 2002.

Lessons Learned and Current Practices from OTI and CMM

The following eight principles for operating in conflict are outlined by CMM and OTI. They would be useful for PVOs creating contingency plans and developing monitoring and evaluation strategies.

1. Conflict is complex and often long-term. Short-term engagements in a country will often show limited impact and will be difficult to measure.⁴
2. Conflict is rarely the result of one root cause. A cross-sectoral approach is therefore advisable if reducing conflict is a desired result. PVOs should coordinate and integrate their programs with the goals of local missions and other development organizations.⁵
3. Conflict is a result of local grievances. Community ownership of development activities and tangible results are imperative in order to foster hope and encourage peace. Development efforts should be demand driven.⁶
4. Conflict is unpredictable. Flexibility both in programming and expectations is necessary because even perfect implementation of development projects may not achieve the desired results in such unstable environments.⁷
5. Conflict is political. Communication with local governments should take place when possible. At the same time, political neutrality must be maintained. Obvious connections to the military can create problems maintaining neutrality.⁴
6. Conflict creates security risks for community members and development staff. PVO and NGO staff must be ensured a minimum level of security. Evacuation plans should be established and should also specify how important documentation will be protected. In addition, a minimum level of security is necessary before a community will feel ready for development efforts.⁵
7. Conflict threatens basic needs. Humanitarian assistance is often necessary in conjunction with development work.⁵
8. Conflict creates monitoring and evaluation difficulties. Monitoring and evaluation is especially important in unstable environments in order to ensure that development is not worsening the situation. Goals should be kept simple and realistic so that even in transitory situations, results can be measured and changes implemented.⁶

⁵ See footnote 3.

⁶ See footnote 1.

⁷ "Lessons Learned in Transition Settings." Office of Transition Initiatives.
http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/oti/aboutoti5.html

PVC Grantees and Conflict

Through its 2003 Annual Survey, PVC attempted to assess the extent to which its grantees were working in and preparing for conflict. The survey posed the following questions:

1. As part of the design of your current PVC-funded program, did you assess your potential to respond to conflict and natural or man-made disasters at the program site?
2. In the past year, has the PVC-funded program needed to deal with conflict, natural or man-made disasters, or staff security issues?

Of the Matching Grant respondents:

- Thirty-eight percent had assessed their potential to respond to conflict
- Fifty-eight percent had dealt with conflict during the past year
- Thirty-three percent had dealt with civil strife

Based on the responses to the survey, PVOs that responded were divided into three categories:

1. Grantees that have assessed their ability to operate in conflict and have experienced civil strife,
2. Grantees that have assessed their ability to operate in conflict and have not experienced civil strife,
3. Grantees that have not assessed their ability to operate in conflict, but have experienced civil strife.

While the survey provided a useful starting point for further research, placing PVOs in these three categories provided little information about what grantees were actually doing to prepare for conflict. In addition, due to the ongoing research in this area, certain PVOs have already transitioned out of category three and into category one. Categorizing grantees in this way does not provide information on the variety of activities being performed in preparation for conflict. The following section will provide an overview of the activities performed by PVO's in PVC's Matching Grant Program. The variance in approaches reflects the large amount of research currently being done on how to conduct development work in conflict settings. The PVOs listed below are ranked from one to five based on their preparation for operating in conflict (one representing the most preparation and five the least).

A Sampling of Approaches Taken by PVC's Matching Grant Recipients

ACCION International (5)

ACCION does not have any strategy for operating in conflict situations. The organization believes that it is neither appropriate nor feasible to perform effective microfinance in situations of active conflict, unless that conflict is confined to a specific geographic area and can be entirely avoided. ACCION has not yet had to face extreme civil strife and plans to end all development projects should conflict erupt in areas where it is programming. However, ACCION did have a microfinance program in Venezuela that remained in operation during the conflict there. Staff were advised to take precautions and the project continued.⁸

Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA) (4)

FINCA also lacks an overarching strategy for handling conflict situations. The rarity of FINCA's exposure to civil strife has prevented the organization from conducting any formal assessments of past actions. Planning for civil strife is done on a program by program basis and only when the project is in a high conflict area such as Afghanistan. FINCA believes that each situation is unique and therefore requires a unique approach.⁹

Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) & PLAN International (3)

MEDA and PLAN both lack an overarching strategy for operating in conflict situations. This is due in part to their reluctance to operate in high-conflict environments. However, a project specific risk-mitigation strategy is included in each project's strategic plan. This strategy might address a range of risks from natural disasters to civil strife. While not funded under a PVC grant, MEDA's work in Haiti was successfully conducted in unstable conditions.¹⁰ PLAN's sustainable microfinance project in Nepal was also successful despite the threat of Maoist rebel activity. PLAN's strategy was to increase the transparency of its communications with clients in order to increase client loyalty and understanding of policies.¹¹

⁸ Phone conversation with Marcia Brown at ACCION. 16 July 2003.

⁹ Email from Andree Simon at FINCA International. 2 July 2003.

¹⁰ Phone conversation with Cherie Tan at MEDA. 10 July 2003.

¹¹ Email from Delores McLaughlin. 2 July 2003.

Christian Children's Fund (CCF) (2)

CCF has worked continually in both conflict and post-conflict environments. CCF points to the need for a holistic approach to development work in post-conflict environments. The organization believes that this approach is not being adopted by the development community, in part because of the restrictions on funds stipulated by donors. This lack of a big-picture focus, CCF says, leads to wasted funds and futile efforts to provide development assistance. CCF also identifies the need for increasing coordination and dissemination of best practices across sectors.¹²

Case in Conflict

In Afghanistan, CCF worked to rebuild the education system in frontline war zones. While CCF focuses on the welfare of children, they recognize that in post-conflict environments the children will only be better off in the long-term if their parents are provided with aid as well. For this reason, CCF is involved in the creation of better water, sanitation and shelter facilities in addition to their work in schools. The organization has also begun to establish income generation programs for the most vulnerable parents.¹³

Mercy Corps (recently transitioned out of group three) (2)

Mercy Corps creates strategies for operating in conflict on a case by case basis. However, Mercy Corps bases all of its programs in conflict areas on the same Civil Society Framework and Do No Harm (DNH)/Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) principles. The framework emphasizes peaceful change, accountability, and local participation and is applied across the multiple sectors in which Mercy Corps works. Mercy Corps follows the Do No Harm approach to ensure that its work in an area adds to the stability of a community and does not undermine the peace process. Partnerships with local NGOs, marked by accountability and transparency, also enable Mercy Corps to respond faster and more efficiently to emergency situations.

Case in Conflict

The population of Maluku, a province in Indonesia, is evenly divided between Muslims and Christians. Since the ethnic conflict of 1999, Maluku has remained unstable. Mercy Corps

¹² Wessells, Mike. "Integration of Programming Across Sectors." Christian Children's Fund. USAID-PVO Dialogue on Working in Conflict. 23-24 January 2003. Washington, D.C.

began its economic recovery program in Maluku 15 months after conflict erupted. This program targeted the most vulnerable and conflict affected sectors of the population, distributing aid through local NGO partners.

The Maluku program, like all of Mercy Corps' capacity building projects, is based on the Civil Society Framework and the Do No Harm approach. A defining characteristic of the Maluku program has been its dedication to employing an integrated workforce. The Mercy Corps team is composed of both Muslims and Christians, ensuring fairness in resource dispersal and political neutrality. This integration has functioned as a unifying element of the project. Frequent team meetings also allow for the flexibility necessary to operate in such an unpredictable environment.¹⁴

World Relief Corporation (WRC) (2)

World Relief is one of the most experienced PVOs performing microenterprise in post-conflict environments. The majority of WRC's microenterprise development (MED) programs are implemented directly following armed conflict. WRC believes that MED programs can be conducted effectively directly following disaster and are capable of reducing the need for traditional humanitarian relief services. For this reason, contingency plans are created for WRC's programs and all projects are monitored by their Disaster Response Division. WRC employs various techniques geared toward increasing program efficiency in conflict zones. These techniques include a multi-sectoral approach to development and the creation of partnerships with local NGO networks. WRC believes that these tactics allow them to respond faster and more effectively in conflict situations. Realizing that conflict is complex and multidimensional, WRC hopes to integrate peace and reconciliation efforts into its MED programs in the near future.

WRC's grant proposal to USAID shows that analysis of latent conflict is also occurring, and programs are being designed to address local tensions. In Bangladesh, Mozambique, and Rwanda, competition over land is cited as a source of tension. MED programs attempt to diffuse these tensions by providing alternate income opportunities. In Bangladesh, political unrest is also prevalent. To protect its programs, WRC has sought strong communication with the

¹³ "Emergencies: Restoring Education in Afghanistan." Christian Children's Fund.
http://www.christianchildrensfund.org/emergencies/afghanistan/afghan_education.cfm

government, while maintaining its political neutrality. Successful MED programs have been established in such unstable environments as Rwanda, Kosovo, Liberia, Cambodia and Mozambique. Case studies and briefs on practices for programming in conflict have been developed and are available at:

http://www.usaidmicro.org/pubs/pubsTemplate.asp?page=/pubs/mbp/microfinance_following_conflict-briefs.htm.

Case in Conflict

WRC's partner program in Liberia has faced two outbreaks of war since 1996. In 1996, the war forced WRC to end operations, while much of the destroyed infrastructure was rebuilt. When WRC returned to the area nine months later, clients readily paid back loans and were eager to participate in new loan programs. During the continuing conflict in Liberia, WRC has kept in close contact with its partner organization, discussing approaches for achieving sustainability throughout the conflict. Security procedures have been established for all staff.¹⁵

World Vision Relief and Development, Inc. (1)

World Vision has also chosen to use the Do No Harm model, noting its simplicity and flexibility in conflict zones. In addition to the Do No Harm model, World Vision uses other tools including the conflict tree, conflict mapping, the ABC (Attitude, Behavior, Context) Triangle, and the Onion. These tools are often used in conjunction with DNH. In order to better respond to the lack of knowledge about appropriate programming techniques in conflict, World Vision's Asia Pacific Regional Office established two LCP Learning Centers in 2001. One was created in the Philippines, the other in Indonesia. One goal of the centers is to examine and interpret work done in conflict areas and translate those lessons learned into field practice. The second goal is to improve community leadership in order to reduce ethno-political conflict.

The LCP Learning Centers have found that field staff are willing to apply conflict analysis tools to projects that are just beginning, but are more reluctant to change existing programs in order to adapt to conflict situations. In addition, the center found that the impacts of longer-term development projects in conflict zones are much subtler and harder to measure than

¹⁴ Maluku Case Study: Integrating Relief, Recovery and Civil Society Principles in a Conflict-Affected Environment." Mercy Corps Indonesia. April 2000-2002.

¹⁵ Email from Wendy-Ann Rowe at World Relief Corporation. 2 July 2003.

the impacts of shorter-term relief work. Still, they note that development work offers community members an alternative to violence, where simple relief does not.¹⁶

Katalysis Partnership (outlier)

Katalysis does not have an overarching strategy for operating in conflict. However, it has a plan for responding to natural disasters. Given that Katalysis has operated in Guatemala during times of civil strife, the organization should consider revamping the disaster plan so that it can also be applied when conflict erupts. This revamped plan could then be shared with local partners at the same time that Katalysis shares its disaster plan.

The disaster response plan has four main components. The first section focuses on the need to establish local partnerships in order to respond immediately to disaster situations. The remaining three sections describe the roles of the local partners, the network secretariat, and Katalysis headquarters in responding to the emergency. Local partners are instructed on the appropriate time that should elapse before beginning to collect loan payments after a disaster, under which conditions loans should be forgiven, and suggestions for meeting the emotional needs of clients. The network secretariat's role is to prepare the local partners and support those affected by the disaster. Lastly, headquarters is given the role of aiding the network secretariat and communicating with donors. Aside from descriptions of first aid kits that should be kept on hand, the majority of the plan is applicable to situations of civil strife. This plan (and similar plans created by other PVOs) could easily and effectively be adapted and applied to situations of civil strife.¹⁷

Current Practices Extracted from Summaries of Grantee Approaches

1. Create a contingency plan for the outbreak of conflict
2. Tailor responses to individual conflict situations
3. Foster local participation, accountability, flexibility, and transparency
4. Improve community leadership in order to reduce ethno-political tensions
5. Coordinate with other development agencies and local NGOs
6. Employ a holistic/multi-sectoral approach to programming in conflict
7. Identify strengths, weaknesses, and relationship to other players
8. Communicate with the local government when possible
9. Maintain neutrality

¹⁶ Riak, Abikok C. "Conflict Analysis, Methodologies and Application to Programming." World Vision. USAID-PVO Dialogue on Working in Conflict. 23-24 January 2003. Washington, D.C.

¹⁷ "When Disaster Strikes: An Action Plan for Preparation and Response for the Unexpected in Central America." Katalysis Partnership, Inc. 2001.

10. Design programs to address latent conflict
11. Conduct assessments to ensure that development is not undermining peace
12. Guarantee a minimum level of staff security
13. Translate lessons learned into field practice

Tools and Models used by Grantees

1. Do No Harm (DNH)/Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) – a framework that helps to ensure that work in an area adds to the stability of a community and does not exacerbate conflict,¹⁸ information available at <http://www.cdainc.com/lcp/index.php> (cited by Mercy Corps and World Vision)
 2. SPHERE - minimum standards in disaster response,¹⁹ information available at http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook_index.htm (cited by Mercy Corps)
 3. Conflict tree – a tool used to identify the root causes of conflict, the effects, and possible solutions (often used when teaching children about conflict) (cited by World Vision)
 4. Conflict mapping – the identification of conflict context, parties involved and degree of involvement, causes and consequences, beliefs and values, goals and interests, purpose, dynamics, and conflict limiting elements (cited by World Vision.)
 5. The Onion – a model used to examine the layers of causes leading to conflict (cited by World Vision)
 6. The ABC – Attitude, Behavior, Context triangle (cited by World Vision)
- An expanded list of tools available on the Internet is provided in Appendix B.

Outside Research: Current Practices and Difficulties

Other PVOs and scholars working within the development community have also identified best practices and difficulties operating in conflict. According to Frederick Cuny, one common result of conflict is the large-scale migration of people from rural areas to cities in search of work. This creates a burden on cities and can lead to increased tension. Cuny suggests that the development approach is better suited for combating this problem than is relief work because development provides alternative income opportunities whereas humanitarian aid does not. This suggestion resembles Sharon Morris's advice to target the root causes of conflict. Cuny also notes that providing development aid in areas where internally displaced persons (IDPs) or refugees have relocated is a viable option and often decreases tension. However, he cautions, there is always the possibility that the local people will exploit the newcomers. In his work *Famine, Conflict and Response*, Cuny prioritizes development activities. He suggests that water

¹⁸ *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*, Mary B. Anderson, Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1999.

¹⁹ *The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*, Oxfam Publishing, 2000.

facilities and then health services should be updated first, followed by public-works projects, agricultural development and the construction of schools.²⁰

Another development scholar, Bernard Wood, also cites important points to consider when working in conflict. Wood believes pre-conflict situations present the ideal situation for achieving maximum impact of development efforts. Root causes can then be targeted in order to help diffuse tensions. However, he believes development work is still important once conflict has escalated. Wood states that two of the most important development goals are “to enhance the rule of law and promote popular participation in democratic processes.” When local governments are still present, a minimum level of support from them is necessary to perform development work. When no government is operating, the first priority of development organizations should be to help restore a sense of security both in the local population and within the development staff. While many relief organizations including USAID make a distinction between emergency relief and long-term development, Wood suggests that these two efforts should be integrated. He argues that coordination between relief and development agencies is imperative for effective programming.²¹

Case studies, best practices, and sector-specific tools have been developed in some areas. The largest amount of information is available in the field of microfinance. Since beginning operations in 1994, the Small Enterprise Education and Promotion Network (SEEP) has actively worked to make this information available throughout the development community. Problems discussed include the need to address gaps in the credit history of refugee populations, flooded credit markets, and the contamination of the credit market when grants are mixed with loans during humanitarian emergencies. One series of case studies and position papers on performing sustainable microfinance in conflict situations was created by representatives from SEEP, World Relief, and other development organizations. These documents are available at http://www.usaidmicro.org/pubs/pubsTemplate.asp?page=/pubs/mbp/microfinance_following_conflict-briefs.htm.

²⁰ Cuny, Frederick C. “Famine, Conflict, and Response: A Basic Guide.” Kumarian Press. 1999.

Future Directions for PVC - Operating in Conflict

PVC's Strategic Framework for 2003-2007 mentions two goals that directly relate to these issues. First, PVC plans to better align itself with the goals of the DCHA bureau by targeting conflict-affected countries. Second, PVC hopes to become a learning organization, disseminating best practices and lessons learned throughout the PVO and NGO communities. Both goals can be accomplished by following a framework adapted from the World Bank's approach to post-conflict work.²²

Knowledge Management

First, in order to become a learning organization, PVC might focus on knowledge management. PVC could easily develop a website and post links to information on current practices already available for programming in conflict situations. Links to networks providing sector-specific tools (ex. The SEEP Network) could also be provided. On this website, PVC should identify problem areas and shortfalls and encourage its grantees to contribute best practices and case studies. PVC should also coordinate research and share findings with both OTI and CMM. This website could be created, in part, by one of the new Presidential Management Interns, starting at PVC in the fall. While the development of a website would not be as difficult as it may seem, PVC could begin with second step of the framework if resources or personnel are unavailable to begin with knowledge management.

As part of the knowledge management task, PVC should also revamp section F. of its annual survey, titled Humanitarian Assistance. Due to the increasing tendency of PVC's grantees to perform development activities in civil strife, more detailed information should be collected in this area in order to facilitate the development of a website. While the addition of too many question might frustrate PVOs, a few changes could be made that would greatly increase the value of the information collected.

Suggested Questions for PVC's 2004 Annual Survey

- Question F1 should be broken down into the same components as question F2. It should read:
As part of the design of your current PVC-funded program, did you assess your potential to respond to conflict, natural or man-made disasters, or staff security issues?

²¹ Wood, Bernard. "Lessons and Guidance for Donors: Key Points from the Development Assistance Committee's Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation." USAID Conference on Promoting Democracy, Human Rights, and Reintegration in Post Conflict Societies. 30-31 October 1997.

²² World Bank approach to post-conflict work as cited in "Operational Challenges in Post-Conflict Societies." USAID Workshop, 28-29 October 1997. Office of Transition Initiatives.

- a. If YES, of what nature were the issues?
 1. Civil strife
 2. Natural disasters
 3. Food insecurity
 4. Staff security issues
- An additional question should be inserted after F1. It should read:
Has your organization developed either an overarching strategy or project specific contingency plans for the event of conflict, natural or man-made disasters, or staff security issues?
If YES to question F2, which was developed?
 1. Overarching strategy
 2. Project-specific plans
 If YES to question F2, for which events were contingency plans developed?
 1. Civil strife
 2. Natural disasters
 3. Food insecurity
 4. Staff security issues
- The current question F2 should then become F3.

Suggested Questions for a Survey Focused on Conflict

1. Does your organization work in countries experiencing civil strife?
2. During which stages or in which types of conflict do you believe development work is effective?

Pre-Conflict

3. Is planning for civil strife a part of your individual program designs?
4. Do you have an overarching strategy or contingency plan that is applied to most conflict situations?
5. Do your development projects target latent conflict and community tensions?

During Conflict

6. In the sectors in which you work, what activities have you found effective in conflict?
7. What changes do you make to development projects when conflict erupts?
8. What conflict management and mitigation tools (if any) are you currently employing?
9. Do you incorporate humanitarian relief or psychological services into your development work during conflict?
10. Do you coordinate your efforts with those of emergency relief providers during conflict?
11. Are there any situations in which your development efforts failed due to the outbreak of conflict?

Post-Conflict

12. Do you have tools for measuring the impact of projects conducted in conflict zones?
13. Do you work in post-conflict environments?
14. If you have case studies or have developed tools based on your work in conflict, would you be willing to share them with PVC and other PVOs?

The answers to these questions would provide a much more accurate view of what grantees are actually doing to prepare for the event of civil strife.

Operational Support

The second area that should be addressed is operational support. Technical assistance could be provided by PVC to PVOs operating in conflict. In the long run, this assistance could be provided by pointing PVOs to PVC's best practice website. In the short term, PVOs could be directed to CMM or OTI's websites or the African Bureau's Conflict Web, which provide a variety of useful tools for performing development activities in civil strife. However, this support will be useless unless PVOs are aware of their own capacity for operating in conflict. Therefore, PVC should use its 2002 "Guidelines for Developing a Detailed Implementation Plan for Matching Grant Proposals" to mandate that all PVOs developing programs in a country where conflict is even a remote possibility assess their ability to work in conflict (not only natural disasters) within their DIP. This assessment could also determine whether the project will target any of the root causes of conflict or will unintentionally exacerbate local tensions. PVC can facilitate this assessment by directing PVOs to CMM's "Conflict Assessment Framework," also available on their website. After performing this assessment, PVOs should be free to create contingency plans as they choose, but should be informed of the questionnaires and other resources already available to accelerate this process.

Capacity Building

Third, capacity building in conflict should be addressed. PVC could stipulate that an early benchmark in a PVO's DIP planning matrix should be the training of staff and local partners for managing the outbreak of conflict. A plan similar to Katalysis's "Action Plan for Preparation and Response for the Unexpected" could be used by grantees to facilitate this process. PVOs' capacity to impact conflict should also be examined in final evaluations. While assessing program impact in conflict settings is more difficult, PVC could offer PVOs impact assessment tools such as the one created by Management Systems International and provided in Appendix A.

External Partnering

Lastly, building the capacity of external partners should be stressed. Grantees, CMM, and other scholars on conflict management have all cited the importance of partnering with local NGOs in order to respond quickly and efficiently to the outbreak of conflict. PVC should also encourage grantees to coordinate with other PVOs in the area in order to develop a more effective, cross-sectoral programming approach. While PVC has been a leader in NGO

partnering for the last two decades, PVC should begin to require that PVOs assess their partners' ability to respond to conflict and share their contingency plans with those partners. This is important since local NGOs will be first on the scene in emergency situations. PVC could also post, on its future website, a list of its grantees' current partners in each country. This might help PVOs select more capable NGOs and could also facilitate the dissemination of best practices within the development community.

Conclusion

By following this framework, PVC will ensure that its grantees adopt best practices for development work in conflict settings. In the long run, development work in conflict will become more effective, PVC will be better aligned with the goals of the DCHA Bureau, and the office will become a learning center and resource for all organizations performing development work abroad.

Appendix A
(Created by Management Systems International)

Illustrative Criteria²³
for Evaluating the Peace and Conflict Impacts of Interventions,
(based on major domains in which conflicts are waged)

Did the application(s) of the intervention:

Standards of Living and Competition over Economic Livelihoods

- stimulate active, salient efforts to address structural disparities among the main groups at odds, by achieving more equitable distributions among them of basic material and economic needs, such as income, educational opportunities, work skills and resources, housing, health services?
- provide means of livelihood that represent viable alternatives to confrontation and violence?
- upgrade the skills and understanding of those significant organized groups who are promoting conflict prevention and reconciliation processes so they can be more effective advocates or implementers of these goals?

Inter-Communal Relations

- provide new programs or projects that engage middle-level and grass-roots members of conflicting groups in non-political activities that serve their common interests?
- change certain ongoing daily policies and practices that had alienated groups from each another?
- reduce everyday tensions and distrust between interacting groups with conflicting interests?

Professional and Business Life ("civil society")

- help build autonomous spheres of social power that are active outside the official organizations of both government and opposition political parties and organizations, which can take on some of the social responsibilities shouldered by the state and provide alternative channels for broad public debate(civil society)?

Governing Processes and Public Decision making
Institutions and Mechanisms

- engage opposed top-level political actors in new contacts and communications?

²³ See <http://inside.usaid.gov/AFR/conflictweb/docs/illpass.doc>

- enter new substantive ideas and options into debate and dialogue that are seriously considered or adopted as compromise solutions of outstanding disputes?
- help the parties' leaders reach agreements on specific disputes and public policy issues?
- change the perceptions and attitudes that the leaderships groups held toward one another?
- soften the stridency and tone of public debate and statements?
- create impersonal ongoing formal mechanisms at different levels through which collective decisions can be made and justice enforced, according to agreed-on rules?
-
- set up or strengthen formal institutions and procedures that encompass broad segments of the population in democratic forms of decision-making?
- create new informal venues and channels through which disputes and issues can be addressed by the protagonists?

Control of Lethal Force (Security)

- deter the outbreak or perpetration of specific possibly imminent acts of violence?
- keep actual low-level eruptions of occasional violence from escalating?
- protect vulnerable groups from likely attacks of violence?
- ease the sense of threat, fear and anxieties expressed by various groups toward one another?

Appendix B

Tools and Resources for Operating in Conflict

“Conflict Analysis and Response Definition.” Forum for Early Warning and Early Response (FEWER). Available at <http://www.fewer.org/res/70.pdf>

“Conflict-sensitive approaches to development practice.” An International Alert-Safeworld-IDRC Report. International Development Research Center. Available at [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/0/d4fe6663c8a7824d85256aef00636e0e/\\$FILE/Co12.pdf](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/0/d4fe6663c8a7824d85256aef00636e0e/$FILE/Co12.pdf)

“Minimum Standards in Disaster Response.” Sphere Project. Available at http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook_index.htm.

Nyheim, David, Manuela Leonhardt, and Cynthia Gaigals. “Development in Conflict: A Seven Step Tool for Planners.” A Fewer, International Alert, and Saferworld Publication. 2001. Available at <http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubdev/tool.pdf>

“Conflict Protection Scorecard: A Powerful Tool to Prevent Human Suffering.” Save the Children. 2003. Available at <http://www.planetwire.org/sowm-2003/Scorecard.pdf> (addresses the needs and vulnerabilities of women and children in conflict)

World Banks Tools

“Conflict Analysis Framework.” The World Bank. 21 April 2003. Available at [http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/TheConflictAnalysisFramework/\\$FILE/CAFApril03.pdf](http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/ESSD/sdvext.nsf/67ByDocName/TheConflictAnalysisFramework/$FILE/CAFApril03.pdf)

“The Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF): Identifying Conflict-related Obstacles to Development.” World Bank. October 2002. Available at [http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/Networks/ESSD/icdb.nsf/D4856F112E805DF4852566C9007C27A6/2EC2E7EBA4A2885485256CE9006795A5/\\$FILE/CPR+5+final+legal.pdf](http://wbln0018.worldbank.org/Networks/ESSD/icdb.nsf/D4856F112E805DF4852566C9007C27A6/2EC2E7EBA4A2885485256CE9006795A5/$FILE/CPR+5+final+legal.pdf)

The Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit.
<http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/essd/essd.nsf/CPR/Home> (offers tools for operating in various sectors during conflict)

USAID Tools

Anderson, Mary B. Do No Harm: how aid can support peace – or war. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. 1999. Available in the USAID library HV 544.5.A53 1999. Information also available at <http://www.cdainc.com/lcp/index.php>

Conflict Assessments and Questionnaires from the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. Available at http://inside.usaid.gov/DCHA/CMM/cmm_tools.html

“Conflict Vulnerability Analysis: Issues, Tools and Responses.” Tulane University and Africa Bureau. April 2001. Available at http://inside.usaid.gov/AFR/conflictweb/docs/cva_april01.doc (includes conflict mapping tool)

“Guide to Program Options in Conflict Prone Settings.” Office of Transition Initiatives. September 2001. Available at http://www.dec.org/pdf_docs/pnacm211.pdf

Clingendael Institute, Conflict Research Unit

Goor, L. van de and S. Verstegen. “Conflict Prognosis: Bridging the Gap from Early Warning to Early Response, Part One.” Conflict Research Unit. Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael." November 1999. Available at http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/Conflict_prognosis1.PDF

Goor, L. van de and S. Verstegen. “Conflict Prognosis: A Conflict and Policy Assessment Framework, Part Two.” Conflict Research Unit. Netherlands Institute of International Relations "Clingendael." 2000. Available at http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/Conflict_prognosis2.PDF